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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (05/19): PALESTINIANS QUESTION
U.S. RESOLVE

Main Stories:

All dailies run extensive coverage on U.S. topics throughout their editions. President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's May 18 joint press availability takes top billing in all papers that include photos of the two leaders. Reporting highlights Obama's message of support for the two-state solution and call on Israel to halt all settlement activities, as well as his comments that peace is in all parties' interest. Reporting also highlights Netanyahu's support of Palestinian self-rule and his failure to reference an independent Palestinian state and his insistence on preconditions before negotiating with the Palestinians. The same articles report on "conflicting" U.S. and Israeli Iran policy, noting Obama willingness to pursue diplomatic channels and Netanyahu's push for a deadline by which Iran must halt its nuclear program.

Al-Ayyam runs a back-page cartoon of President Obama and Israeli Premier Netanyahu secretly thinking they are the senior partner controlling the other. Al-Quds runs an inside cartoon of Obama and Netanyahu's coat tails tied together with Obama walking towards the Palestinian-Israeli issue and Netanyahu pulling in the opposite direction towards the Iranian issue. In other images, Al-Quds' runs an inside photo of "supporters of Israel" protesting in Washington on May 18 against the two state-solution, holding a sign with the text, "NO PLO Terrorist State in the Jewish Biblical Heartland."

All front pages highlight the conclusion of the fifth round of Palestinian national unity talks in Cairo on May 18. Al Ayyam runs quotes by head of the Fatah parliamentary block Azzam Al-Ahmad noting that the round ended without meaningful results in the areas of new elections, security, and government composition. Al-Ahmad further clarified that there was no agreement on forming a joint security committee in Gazasince Hamas seeks to minimize Fatah's

role on the issue. All dailies report that the new transitional Palestinian Authority (PA) care-taker government will be led by PA Premier Fayyad who is to be sworn into office on May 19.

U.S. Consul General Jake Waller's meeting with Palestinian Authority President Abbas in Ramallah on May 18 is front page news in Al Hayat Al Jadida. Al Quds also runs inside coverage on the meeting that focused on preparations for Abbas' visit to Washington. The papers also note that Abbas briefed Waller on "recent developments" in the Palestinian Territories and efforts to end internal Palestinian division.

An Al-Quds' inside page reports on U.S. Security Coordinator General Dayton's lecture at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy on May 7. According to coverage, Dayton stated that ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict serves U.S. national security interests as well as the interests of the whole world. Dayton reiterated strong U.S. support for the two-state solution, reporting concludes.

Al-Quds runs front page coverage of Senator Kerry's May 18 interview with London-based Al-Hayat newspaper. Speaking at the World Economic Forum at the Dead Sea Kerry stated that the U.S. will not abandon the Arab Peace Initiative. On the contrary, the U.S. will build on the initiative that provides a good framework for restarting negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel, Kerry added, according to reporting.

All dailies report on the Israeli Government's intention to enlarge the Miskiyot settlement in the Jordan Valley, West Bank. Israel has

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put out a call for bids to construct 20 housing units, according to reporting. Palestinian Authority presidential spokesperson Abu Rudaynah called the move provocative and proof that the Israeli government will continue settlement activities. Abu Rudaynah also condemned the Israeli decision to allow settlers access to Hebron city on May 18. Al Quds front pages a photo from the settlers' entry into the city, showing a Palestinian woman anxiously observing a tense Israeli soldier standing guard. She is standing in front of a shuttered Palestinian shop with a bright red Star of David spray-painted on the door. Papers also note that several protests were organized by Palestinians during the settlers' visit.

In local economic news, front pages highlight the May 18 Amman signing ceremony of the merger between Palestinian telecommunications company Paltel and Kuwaiti Zein company. According to Sabih Al-Masri, head of Paltel Board of Directors, "this merger is the largest deal ever reached in the history of the Palestinian Territories as it will generate annual revenues exceeding \$1 billion."

BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Abdil Rahim Malluh, Vice Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine opines in Al-Quds independent daily under the title, "Obama, Netanyahu and the latest in the region" (05/19): "For the Obama administration to establish credibility, Obama needs to seriously move towards forcing Israel to halt all settlement activities, particularly in the E1 block; halt the expansion of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement, halt all actions aimed at transforming Jerusalem into a Jewish city and lift the siege on Gaza. He must call on the U.N. Security Council to enforce U.N. resolutions regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, respect for the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and the right of return for refugees based on resolution number 194."

2) Regular columnist Adli Sadik opines in Al-Ayyam independent daily under the title, "Awaiting a U.S. change" (05/19): "Forcing Netanyahu to speak about the two-state solution is not enough because the Americans and the whole world are fed up with statements ...the scene now requires... [proof of] the seriousness of the American people to support the peace process during the Obama era... if Obama's administration does not support a real peace process, then it will repeat the same mistakes as the previous administration which contributed nothing to the world except for making it less

secure."

WALLES